

Hemoglobin Traits (Hb C, D or E Carrier)

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Congratulations on the birth of your new baby! As part of the routine newborn screen, Utah tests all babies for sickle cell disease and other serious inherited hemoglobin problems. Sometimes, in the process of looking for serious problems, we find babies who are carriers of other hemoglobin types. On your baby's newborn screening test a different kind of hemoglobin was found. This guide will help answer some of your questions. It should not take the place of an informed discussion with your medical home (doctor).

Is my baby sick?

No. An unusual hemoglobin trait is not an illness. Your baby is healthy.

How did my baby get a hemoglobin trait?

Hemoglobin type, like hair color and height, is passed down in the family through genes. An unusual hemoglobin trait occurs when a baby gets one normal hemoglobin gene from one parent, and one abnormal hemoglobin gene from the other parent.

Are hemoglobin traits more common in certain ethnic or racial groups?

Although any family can pass down an abnormal hemoglobin trait, some traits are more common in people of certain ethnic or racial groups. For example, the type called hemoglobin E is very common in people whose ancestors came from Southeast Asia. Another hemoglobin type, called hemoglobin C, is very common in people whose ancestors came from Africa. And a third type, called hemoglobin D, is very common in people whose ancestors came from Pakistan and North West India.

Can a hemoglobin trait ever turn into a disease?

Never. Your baby's hemoglobin gene will not change. It remains the same for life.

Can I find out exactly what hemoglobin trait my baby carries?

Yes. Ask your doctor for more specific information on your baby's hemoglobin trait.

Is there anything a person with a hemoglobin trait should do?

If you need more information about hemoglobin traits, talk to your doctor. You may also want to have a genetic consultation for your family to see how the hemoglobin trait might affect future children, or your grandchildren.

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